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STATE FOR WHA/CAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2111
TAGS: PREL, PTER, BE, CA
SUBJECT: BELGIAN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION ABOUT REPORTED
EXTRADITION/RENDITION THROUGH ANTWERP AIRPORT OF MAHER ARAR

Classified By: DCM Will Imbrie, Reason 1.4 (B)

1. (U) Action Request -- see paragraph two.

2. (SBU) On February 17, Belgian Justice Minister Onkelinx fielded questions in Parliament regarding press reports about a USG-chartered aircraft that landed at Antwerp's Deurne airport on July 20, 2002. The aircraft reportedly was transporting Maher Arar, the dual citizen Canadian/Syrian who filed a suit against the USG for sending him to Syria, where he claimed to have been tortured. Because of questions about this flight, Onkelinx has had to put a hold on plans to issue a formal statement indicating there were no extraordinary rendition flights involving the U.S. through Belgian territory or airspace.

3. (C) Action Request: Post requests that Department provide us with language for replying to the queries Onkelinx has made regarding the flight. Any language we provide will be used in her reply to parliament as representing the position of the USG. The full text of her question follows in paragraph four.

4. (U) Begin text:

Subject: Transit flight via regional airport of Deurne

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Reference: Oral questions of Mr. Patrick Van Molle
(17/02/2006)

Concerning our demand about the Gulfstream III flight on July 20th 2002, we'd like to add the following questions; as we discussed already orally:

According to the press article in La Libre Belgique, a certain Maher Arar would have been on board. When did Maher Arar try to enter the United States via New York(?)

Why was entry in the United States refused to him? Did he figure on a list with terrorists?

Why, if this was the case, was he driven back instead of being arrested?

Where to has Maher Arar been forced back?

Did Maher Arar at any moment during this operation transit in Deurne or any other airport on Belgian soil?

As already orally discussed earlier, would you be so kind to pass on these questions as well to the Homeland Security and Immigration Department?

Thank you very much. (27-02-2006) End Text

Korologos

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